

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**  
**A Public School - 13VA6**

School Type (Public Schools):      **Charter**      **Title 1**      **Magnet**      **Choice**  
                                                                  

Name of Principal: Ms. Kimberly Cousins

Official School Name: Meriwether Lewis Elementary School

School Mailing Address: 1610 Owensville Road  
Charlottesville, VA 22901-9407

County: Albemarle      State School Code Number\*: 002-0250

Telephone: (434) 293-9304      E-mail: kcousins@k12albemarle.org

Fax: (434) 979-3850      Web site/URL:  
http://www2.k12albemarle.org/school/mles/Pages/default.aspx

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*: Dr. Pam Moran Ed.D.      Superintendent e-mail: moran@k12albemarle.org

District Name: Albemarle County Public Schools      District Phone: (434) 296-5826

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Ned Gallaway

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

*\*Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*  
The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools (Aba.Kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

## **PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or its equivalent each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's AYP requirement or its equivalent in the 2012-2013 school year. Meeting AYP or its equivalent must be certified by the state. Any AYP status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2007 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for that period.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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All data are the most recent year available.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 16 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
6 Middle/Junior high schools  
4 High schools  
0 K-12 schools  
26 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 11046

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Small city or town in a rural area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	32	38	70
1	47	32	79
2	48	31	79
3	42	25	67
4	36	34	70
5	36	35	71
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
<b>Total in Applying School:</b>			436

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
2 % Asian  
1 % Black or African American  
3 % Hispanic or Latino  
1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
91 % White  
1 % Two or more races  
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2011-2012 school year: 5%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Step	Description	Value
(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	11
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	10
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	21
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	442
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.05
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	5

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 3%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 11

Number of non-English languages represented: 5

Specify non-English languages:

Spanish, Hebrew, Swedish, French, and Tigrinya

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 10%

Total number of students who qualify: 43

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 6%

Total number of students served: 28

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>3</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>2</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>10</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>1</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<b><u>Full-Time</u></b>	<b><u>Part-Time</u></b>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>21</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>13</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>0</u>	<u>11</u>
Total number	<u>32</u>	<u>31</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

21:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2012.

Graduating class size: \_\_\_\_\_

Enrolled in a 4-year college or university \_\_\_\_\_%

Enrolled in a community college \_\_\_\_\_%

Enrolled in vocational training \_\_\_\_\_%

Found employment \_\_\_\_\_%

Military service \_\_\_\_\_%

Other \_\_\_\_\_%

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_**0%**

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

No

Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

## PART III - SUMMARY

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Meriwether Lewis Elementary School's namesake is an explorer that impacted our nation. Meriwether Lewis is best known for his exploration on a transcontinental expedition to the Pacific Coast. He learned about our great country and its people through discovery, inquiry, exploration, collaboration, and communication. This provides opportunities for our students to explore in their learning. Our school sits in the rural area of Albemarle County, Virginia, yards away from the original home of Meriwether Lewis, surrounded by farmland with a few suburban-like neighborhood scattered in between. The beautiful scenic landscape of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the learning values of our namesake, our inviting and active community, and overall academic success make us a school that is specifically sought out by many families in-state, nationally and internationally.

Meriwether Lewis Elementary School's vision is for all of our students to be lifelong learners and active, effective participants in local and global communities. We plan to prepare each child to follow his or her road for success in a world that has yet to be discovered.

Meriwether Lewis was built in 1988 in its current location. An older building provided education to generations of students before us. Today we teach the children and grandchildren of students that once walked the halls of this school and the original school. The parent community plays an important role in our collaborative effort, providing their own time and resources to support all our students in their efforts to be successful.

The school's culture is positive, encouraging, safe, and inviting for all students and the community partners. We embrace a continuous school improvement model focused on becoming more student-centered in our environment as well as with instructional practices. We have established a partnership with the students, teachers, school, parents, and local community, working together to contribute resources for all students and the community around us. The community actively participates in many events and performances organized by the school and a very active Parent-Teacher Organization, PTO. The PTO works hard to provide student scholarships and resources that benefit all of our teachers and students.

Through project-based instruction and products, students have a variety of authentic learning experiences. These experiences are not limited to Virginia's SOLs, but focus on Albemarle County's lifelong learning standards that impact the whole child. Academic nights, the annual health and fitness fair for students, physical activity breaks (like Meriwether Movers, a morning dance experience for the entire student body), field trips to a wide variety of places, and musical performances that engage all students, are some of the ways each grade level is able to expand learning experiences outside of the traditional classroom and connect with our educational partners (both within and outside of the school).

We believe in educating the whole child— the heart, the mind, and the body. The implementation of Responsive Classroom, Restorative Practices, and the Olweus Bully Prevention programs support our community building and help to foster the culture of respect and empathy school-wide. We have a well-established "buddies program" in which our older students have the opportunity to partner with our younger children and learn mentoring skills. All teachers are using morning meetings and class meetings to resolve conflict and establish important and meaningful routines and relationships.

Meriwether Lewis has won the *Governor's Award for Educational Excellence* for the past four years (2009 – 2012). We have also received the bronze award for the *HealthierUS School Challenge*, (2011) national recognition for significant improvement in our student health, fitness, and nutrition programs. The effective reputation of our school attracts very innovative and progressive teachers. Several of them present at conferences and workshops within our school division, as well as state and national education

conferences.

Our reputation also attracts families to surrounding neighborhoods. A parent of recent graduates wrote about her experiences at Meriwether Lewis:

*Meriwether Lewis provides all students with the foundation to succeed in the global community. They highly qualified and caring faculty and administration serve students with the tools they will need to continue their education and ultimately choose their path in education, career and citizenship. From alternative learning spaces to technology opportunities, Meriwether Lewis prepares the whole child to succeed...As a parent of three children who graduated from Meriwether Lewis Elementary School, I am grateful for the commitment to excellence on the part of the faculty and administration.*

The mission of Meriwether Lewis Elementary School is to engage the hearts, minds, and bodies of each student to prepare them for success in a global community. Teachers participate in professional development around best practices in education through consistent professional learning community conversations around student work. Engaging and innovative practices that bring teaching and learning beyond the classroom walls, connecting with students in meaningful ways based on their learning styles, and the use of lifelong learning standards raises the levels of expectations for all teachers and students.

## **PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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### **1. Assessment Results:**

The Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment is administered to all elementary students in grades three, four, and five, in the spring of each school year. The assessment is designed to evaluate student knowledge of the Virginia Department of Education Standards of Learning objectives. These objectives are taught in core subject areas in each grade level. The assessments consist of:

- Grade 3—reading, math, science, and social studies
- Grade 4--- reading and math
- Grade 5---reading, math, science, social studies and writing

Individual student performances are scored as either Pass/Proficient score (400 – 499) or Pass/ Advanced score (500 – 600). Because we are consistent in obtaining high pass rates, Meriwether Lewis is focused on increasing the growth of the advanced pass rates of students in each content area.

To obtain the school’s overall SOL pass rate, the scores for each grade level tested were combined. In 2012 the combined scores for Meriwether Lewis Elementary School students passing the SOL tests in grades three, four, and five are as follows: Reading – 96.2% and Math -85.1 %. Students in grades three and five were tested in both Science and Social Studies/VA Studies. 95.7% of the combined students passed Science and 94.9% of the same students passed Social Studies. Fifth grade students were administered the SOL writing test, in which 98.6% passed.

We are a fully accredited school that has met all the Federal Annual Measurable Outcomes – AMOs. Our strong pass rates are a result of several factors. Our teachers work collaboratively at each grade level, with both specialists and resource teachers, to identify clear objectives, plan instruction and assessments, evaluate student performance and the effective implementation of instruction. When students experience difficulty, teachers identify the specific area of struggle and provide timely intervention through differentiated lessons, small group instruction, or additional learning time. As part of our Response to Intervention, RTI, students may receive tier 1 or 2 intervention support during Core Extension (CE). Classroom teachers and intervention specialists work with students of discrete skills in reading and math at each grade level, K-5, for 180 minutes a week. Intervention occurs during regular school hours without pulling them from any new instruction with the class. Our school based intervention team, made up of an intervention specialist, school psychologist, principal, the classroom teacher, also includes the student’s parents, and any other resource relevant to their needs for success.

In 2012 the combined advance pass scores for Meriwether Lewis Elementary School students in grades three, four, and five were 54% in Reading and 24% in Mathematics. Our advance proficient score in Science was 47.1%, in Social Studies was 60.4%, and in Writing it was 39.7%. We are proud of our advanced pass rates and attribute our success to our focus on lifelong learner skills that go well beyond the essential state standards. We implement a concept-based framework for planning curriculum, instruction, and assessment that connect larger concepts. We strive to make learning significant and meaningful for learners by implementing critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, communication and choice, as well as other elements for lifelong learning into the whole student learning experience at all grade levels.

### **2. Using Assessment Results:**

Classroom teachers, resource teachers, and specialists meet in professional learning teams to review current SOL data, and learning outcomes, study, discuss and plan using the state, district, and school standards. Having common, clear learning expectations for all students set the foundation for planning meaningful assessments that inform what students know and are able to do, and determine what they need

to know and do. The collected information informs how we plan for instruction and monitor progress toward specific learning goals. Through the use of consistent and common assessments, teachers collaboratively examine student performance and determine student needs regularly. Teachers discuss the learning needs of all students, at all levels, to provide appropriate challenge and differentiate instruction. Additional support and resources are used as needed to intervene with struggling learners in a timely and specific manner as part of the plan for success.

Resource teachers, including special education teachers, gifted research teacher, speech-language pathologist, ESOL teacher, reading/math intervention specialist, school psychologist, or school counselor, often meet with grade level teams to help review performance data, suggest effective intervention strategies for specific learning needs, model instructional strategies for implementation in the classroom environment, and help support the planning of instructional/organizational strategies.

We believe that the system we have in place is effective and impacting students, but it is our responsibility to improve. Multiple teachers help to determine student needs, and monitor progress. Our focus for growth is to work with students to develop independence, student ownership of learning, and confidence to acknowledge their needs and actively participate in meeting specific learning goals.

Not only do we spend time making sense of our data, we also believe it is important to communicate our assessment results. Each year we make available to parents through the mail all formal testing information that includes SOL test results and Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAt) for second graders and few fourth graders. Teachers hold parent conferences regularly to review assessment information and help them understand how students are performing. This information is also documented quarterly on report cards. Teachers communicate routinely with parents through newsletters, emails, blogs, and/or webpage to inform about curriculum, planning, and performance expectations.

School performance information is shared with the community at PTO meetings, the state of the school address, school improvement meetings highlighting accomplishments, strengths, and areas for growth for our school. The state of the school provides school background, some academic history, staffing, performance, goals, and plan for growth and improvement. Monthly school improvement team meetings review and monitor school data and progress toward goals. We utilize a Plan, Do, Study, Act model that supports the analysis of effective strategies and revisions in real time to immediately impact students in a timely manner, gaining more opportunity for student success. Updates are shared with the division and coaches mid-year for additional support. The PTO collects information on the school at monthly meetings to determine how they can plan effective support and meaningful resources to impact all students throughout the year.

### **3. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

Our collaboration, sharing, and learning extend beyond the walls of our school building. We strive to make our work part of a larger global community. Several of our teachers and administrative staff have presented at division, state and national conferences, sharing student success and the innovative practices that impact student growth. Several members of our instructional staff are using social media (like Twitter and Pinterest) to share ideas, and research resources from around the world. A group of innovative teachers also have students driving global sharing in the classroom through resources such as SKYPE, blogs, and Twitter. Technology and social media have clearly impacted the evolution of how we share and access information.

Making Connections is a school division organized professional day that provides a variety of sessions for teachers and administrators to engage in new learning opportunities to grow, explore, and develop new skills. Sessions are often led by national educators, state educational leaders, and now an increase of local educational leaders. Meriwether Lewis has produced many instructional leaders and facilitators. VASCD – Virginia Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development – is a state conference that hosts a variety of educators in K-12 and higher education. Meriwether Lewis has shared several proposals

and has been asked to present at the conference with other national and state educational leaders. We have sent the principal, small groups and individual teachers to share their knowledge, successful experiences, and practices in a range of topics over the past 4 years. These topics include: effective student choice in the classroom, innovative technology integration, CoderDojo – a student computer programming experience, differentiating instruction practices, meaningful student collaboration, and developing a positive classroom climate and school culture that supports powerful teaching and learning.

Our physical education team has developed a powerful PE program that is focused on making healthy choices. Working collaboratively with our classroom teachers, they have integrated movement for kids throughout the day to prevent brain fatigue and support focused learning. They share their program and techniques with educators at a variety of national conferences including: PETE – Physical Education, Teacher Education; American Alliance for Health, PE, Recreation, and Dance; James Madison University Health Institute; and VAPERD – Virginia Alliance of PE, Recreation, and Dance.

Regular professional development (both informal and formal) to learn and develop new skills and explore new ideas encourages us to reach outside our school more. Our learning environment, for both teachers and students, is often with other schools and classrooms in Charlottesville and beyond. We are often asked to be the host site for visits from other schools and administrators. Our students take pride in sharing the purpose for many of their activities and the meaning of their work. The students continue to develop oral language skills, vocabulary, and confidence when they communicate with our visitors and volunteers. Students are now included in local conference/workshop presentations.

#### **4. Engaging Families and Communities:**

Supporting student growth outside of the regular school day is an important part of our work at Meriwether Lewis. Our students are fortunate to have many enrichment opportunities in addition to their general school education to enhance their learning experiences. Third grade students participate in the 4-H public speaking program and competition annually. Each student prepares a speech on a Famous American and presents it before an audience of their peers, parents, and judges. Everyone receives feedback based on a specific rubric, supported by the 4-H organization, and scores are ranked. Top ranked speeches later are presented against top performers from other schools. The program judges present awards to the top performers. Meriwether Lewis third grade students have taken top awards for the past two years.

The Extended Day Enrichment Program (EDEP), is an after school program, sponsored by the county, that provides many activities centered around student interests, including art, physical activity, and theater production. This program runs throughout the school year. It also provides opportunities for students to work on their school projects, to get support with studying, prepare for tests, and practice for in-school presentations. Students are able to access a variety of resources: computers, the internet, periodicals, books, materials, and teacher support that they may not have available at home.

Enrichment Zone (EZ), sponsored by the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), provides mini-enrichment sessions for a limited number of children 4 times a year. These sessions include foreign language, robotics, puppetry, chess, theater, math monsters, cake decorating, and so much more. These do require a small tuition but many scholarships are supported so all our children are able to participate if they choose. We host a Kids Night Out event held at least four times per year on Friday nights. Children come without their parents to experience an engaging and exciting Friday night with their friends that are focused on fun—movies, arts and crafts, etc. The many PTO activities and events encourage the building of positive and trusting relationships with students and adults within our school community. The contribution to our school culture of safety, trust, and learning empowers our students to interact with a variety of people, including helpful volunteers, to engage in work, and to be their own advocate for their success. Our students are well supported by the community that volunteers thousands of hours each year to assist with student growth and achievement. We are very grateful for their involvement.

There are other county sponsored programs and competitions such as the Stock Market game, Destination Imagination (DI) and local math and writing competitions. In past years we have had DI teams that went to state and global finals.

# PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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## 1. Curriculum:

The curriculum for Meriwether Lewis Elementary School is based on the Albemarle County Public School's Framework for Quality Learning (FQL). A curriculum that is concept-centered, standards-based, which emphasizes lifelong learning, and is connected to Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL) and national standards. Standards and skills are benchmarked to set K-5 expectations throughout the four quarters of each grade level. Most importantly, the Lifelong Learner Competencies, developed by Albemarle County teachers, are the glue that ties all of our work with students together—from lesson plans to performance assessments. The Lifelong Learner Competencies are standards for all learners such as: plan and conduct research; think analytically, critically and creatively to pursue new ideas, acquire new knowledge and make decisions; and seek, recognize, and understand systems, patterns, themes and interactions. Together teachers and students set instructional goals for individual progress, monitor, and evaluate toward goals. There is great excitement, energy, and support in the challenge for each learner.

**Reading/English Language Arts:** Our literacy curriculum addresses all the facets of language arts instruction – fluency, comprehension, writing, and word study – that must come together for a child to truly access the richness of language. The spiraling nature of the curriculum both embeds and extends the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) for English Language Arts. Teachers should access those standards and the Virginia SOL Curriculum Framework for the discrete skills and essential knowledge required for each grade. However, the SOL are minimum requirements for proficiency; this curriculum articulates requirements beyond that minimum for lifelong learning. While this curriculum framework spirals concepts, it also takes into consideration the level of sophistication with which learners engage with text and as readers and writers. Students participate in programs such as Being a Writer and the University of Virginia's Word Study. Teachers utilize structures such as timed repeated readings, a focus on strategy instruction and guided reading.

**Mathematics:** The mathematics curriculum has been changed to reflect the new Standards of Learning. The instructional resources have been reviewed and updated materials were made available to teachers cover the new standards. The common assessments per grade level received necessary changes to align with the current standards and our instructional approach that emphasizes problem solving, critical thinking and the manipulation of information. Teachers use Investigations to guide their instruction and incorporate on-line instruction tools such as Reflex Math, Brain Pop, and SOLpass.

**Science:** During science instruction, teachers emphasize the scientific method through a concept-centered science curriculum. Students conduct investigations. They develop questions, formulate simple hypotheses, make predictions, and gather data, making inferences and drawing conclusions.

**Social Studies:** Social studies include history, geography, civics and economics. Through a multi-faceted curriculum, students develop critical thinking skills and come to better understand the past, the present, their community, and themselves.

**Visual and Performing Arts:** All students participate in weekly music and visual arts programs led by teacher specialists. Fine Arts associations in the community - including Piedmont Council of the Arts, The Paramount Theatre, and Charlottesville Symphony - annually sponsor a number of professional performances for our students at all grade levels. Through these partnerships and through individual school efforts, students enjoy a variety of fine arts programs at the school and in the community. Our young artists partnered with Habitat for Humanity of Charlottesville to create mosaics and posters celebrating the beauty and diversity of Charlottesville communities and the positive effects of Habitat for Humanity on those communities.

**Physical Education/Health/Nutrition:** All students participate in weekly physical education classes. PE teachers coordinate with the instructional staff to integrate lessons as well as to host the annual Health Fair for students. Our nurse highlights healthy lifestyle habits at faculty meetings and the entire staff participates in a movement activity at the beginning of each day.

## **2. Reading/English:**

The language arts curriculum allows children to explore the many facets that construct the richness of language and the many genres through which authors express ideas about the world. In doing so, children must grapple with the big ideas contained in the structures of language and the complexities of text, through reading, writing, and speaking. In doing this, children will explore what it means to think about language and literature and to think through language and literature. This standards-based, concept-centered curriculum seeks to guarantee that all students, regardless of proficiency, will be able to access the concepts that reside at the very core of English language arts. Those concepts, then, become the non-negotiables, and the related texts and activities become the means by which students explore the concepts. As such, students at any level should connect learning to each of the enduring understandings and concepts, and their depth of understanding should increase throughout their lives. Moreover, this curriculum spirals throughout a child's school experience, thus acknowledging that in language arts, much of the content must become automatic skill in order for the learner to access more sophisticated content. It addresses the facets of language arts instruction – fluency, comprehension, writing, and word study – that must come together for a child to truly access the richness of language. The spiraling nature of the curriculum both embeds and extends the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) for English Language Arts. Teachers should access those standards and the Virginia SOL Curriculum Framework for the discrete skills and essential knowledge required for each grade. However, the SOLs are minimum requirements for proficiency; this curriculum articulates requirements beyond that minimum for lifelong learning. While this curriculum framework spirals concepts, it also takes into consideration the level of sophistication with which learners engage with text and as writers.

The language arts program is comprised of a balanced literacy diet of fluency, comprehension, word study, and linguistics/writing are learned in small literacy groups, large group, differentiated group, and workshop instruction. Often, students pair up for practice of timed fluency passages where appropriate. Additional practice occurs throughout the content areas. Novel studies, literacy projects, multi-media presentations and oral presentations are some of the opportunities for students to apply learned skills to new situations. Guided Reading practices are used in small-group and whole-class instruction based on independent reading levels and student interests. Teachers provide direct instruction in a variety of reading strategies. Students need modeling of various strategies, guided practice in using those strategies, and multiple opportunities for independent practice. Being a Writer and Handwriting without Tears are two resources used consistently at appropriate levels to support writing instruction for all students. Language arts instruction is scheduled 120-140 minutes a day for each grade level to provide students ample opportunity for learning in a variety of methods. Resources, such as Foundations and Wilson Reading, are used for intervention, to help strengthen language arts skills and close learning gaps. Students that struggle significantly in reading achievement receive intervention support through RTI, receiving additional time for differentiated, increased focused instruction and practice of specific skills to close learning gaps. Students work together in small groups of 3-8 with a specialist at a separate time from their core language arts instruction, two days a week. Flexible grouping allows students to enter and leave intervention services based on their individual progress and mastery of discrete skills.

## **3. Mathematics:**

The mathematics curriculum is aligned to Virginia's SOLs and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards. The curriculum standards are organized into strands: numbers and operations, geometry and measurement, data analysis and probability, and patterns and algebra for each grade level, progressing in complexity. All students receive 60-90 minutes of math instruction daily that includes both independent and guided practice. Investigations and Scott-Foresman Addison are integrated

to engage students in problem solving, critical thinking, and concept building. Instructional methods emphasize hands-on work with manipulatives and many online resources direct students towards process and explanation to solutions. Past data with the use of the New Standards Reference Exam (NSRE) indicated that our students were strong in computation and accurate solutions of facts, but poor in problem solving and critical thinking. There has been a shift from a focus on memorizing facts and algorithms to understanding concepts and proving how to resolve problems. Instruction in small group work stations is instrumental in implementing differentiated learning experiences relevant to student needs and performance. Students that perform above grade level receive enrichment opportunities that provide additional challenge with support by the gifted resource teacher. She develops lesson and experiences that push students to find solutions and detailed explanations to sophisticated problems. Students that struggle significantly in math achievement receive intervention support through RTI, receiving additional time for differentiated, increased focused instruction and practice of specific skills to close learning gaps. Students work together in small groups of 3-8 with a specialist at a separate time from their core math instruction, two days a week. Flexible grouping allows students to enter and leave intervention services based on their individual progress and mastery of discrete skills.

#### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

Meriwether Lewis values the evolution of our physical education program. It focuses on teaching students to make healthy choices, lifelong choices that benefit them throughout their life. Students receive 120 minutes of physical education instruction a week to enhance skillful movement, personal fitness, responsible health behaviors, and a physically active lifestyle. Our team has studied the brain research that states that body movement stimulates the brain, prevents brain fatigue, and enhances alertness and focused learning. When children sit too long they lose focus and attention, an issue in many classrooms. PE teachers collaborated with our third grade team to build movement for students throughout the day. Plans changed to get limit the amount of “sit-time” in class. Kids are moving in the room after 20-30 of sitting. Students are allowed to stand instead of sit when needed. Transitions include 2-4 minutes of organized activity that includes crossing the mid-line of the body before starting new instruction. This also exercises both sides of the brain. Student academic performance data for this grade was collected for a year and there was notable growth. Teachers noticed an improvement with attentiveness with distracted learners. This action research was shared with the faculty and change was implemented school-wide.

“Activity Breaks” were recorded, student designed videos of a class modeling specific cardio skills and stretching techniques. Stored on the server, teachers are able to select a variety of “breaks” to get kids moving when needed in class. This structured activity has now become part of our daily curriculum. Newly added to our focus to move to learn is “Meriwether Movers”. Different student groups lead two minutes of physical movement on video stream as part of the morning announcements, school-wide.

Other activities and events that involve students in health and fitness include: Math facts and vocabulary are often integrated into movement and cardio lessons during PE classes; fifth grade students perform in half-time routines twice a year at the local middle school basketball games; Early Bird PE, when the school gym is open early before school starts; Family PE week, a planned time when parents are invited to join PE classes with their student; the annual Health and Fitness Fair, all students rotate through stations related to fitness activities, healthy food choices, and nutrition education; and a Cup Stacking tournament that occasionally includes a couple competing teachers and the principal for challenge.

#### **5. Instructional Methods:**

At Meriwether Lewis there are numerous strategies and programs in place which work in tandem to improve student learning. Albemarle County Public Schools has developed the FQL to help teachers plan instruction using a standards-based, concept-centered approach to teaching and learning. Teachers study and organize state standards around key concepts and understanding of a discipline. Planning in this way, impacts instruction and student learning by providing the opportunity for student to study concepts over time and across subjects. After thoroughly studying the curriculum, teachers plan assessment that measure

student understanding of the material. Effective instructional methods are determined so that students are able to meet the expectations of mastery learning. Teachers employ Marzano's High Yield strategies, Schlechy's Engaging Qualities, Wiggins' Understanding by Design and 21st century practices of creation, collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and choice to ensure students receive high quality and global instruction and learning experiences. Our systems of teacher performance appraisal and classroom walkthroughs help to reinforce high expectations and the use of effective strategies.

Core Extension Time is scheduled daily 45 minutes a day for each grade level. Many struggling students need a little more time or a small group setting with focus on a specific skill to help them grasp an idea or become more proficient with a discrete skill. During this time students may receive enrichment support if they have demonstrated proficiency, review and practice supported by the classroom teacher, or specific intervention provided by a certified teacher specialist to work on closing learning gaps. Every student has goals of mastery, meeting or exceeding the grade level benchmarks. All the adults in the building do whatever it takes to support each student in their achievement.

Students continue to engage in project-based learning experiences that create greater meaning of concepts for students. These memorable learning experiences emphasize action, creation of products or performance that demonstrates their understanding and application of learned information and skills. We are improving this by integrating student input on the rubrics used to set learning expectations and the measure of expected outcomes. The student investment in the rubrics encourages a shared ownership by everyone in the learning community.

## **6. Professional Development:**

Professional development at Meriwether Lewis is continuous and connected to our school goals as well as the professional SMART goals set by teachers for their own growth. Each year the school improvement team implements the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) model to determine a specific plan for continuous growth and improvement for the school. The team studies the outcomes in comparison to the set goals to evaluate our success and to make decisions on how to move forward. Goals are revised and aligned to the division goals, a plan is created to guide how we will achieve our goals, and then the strategies to meet the objectives are put into motion. This is all shared with the school community to foster a community partnership that works together toward common success for the school. Professional development opportunities are planned to support the needs of the teachers.

Since our school goals are very student-centered, most of our professional work has been in developing culturally sensitive, empathetic, independent citizens that engage in global learning and the global community. Teacher learning opportunities are planned for a variety of times throughout the year. Teachers collaborate and learn from one another in Professional Learning Community sessions held once a week. Larger group learning sessions occur with the faculty twice a month as a school, in grade bands, or vertical groups, in Faculty Development, instead of traditional faculty meetings. Twice a year teachers participate in professional development days that are planned specifically to their learning interests. Some of the areas of development have been Responsive Classroom, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Restorative Practices, Maker Spaces, strategies for engaging students in learning, the integration of technology and other global resources, and practices that contribute an effective student-centered school learning environment. As a result, our school is gradually transforming to meet high expectations and the learning needs of students in the 21st century.

## **7. School Leadership:**

The current administrative team, consisting of the principal and assistant principal, has served Meriwether Lewis Elementary School for five consecutive years. This team works collaboratively with the all teachers, but specifically the instructional leaders of the school to create a school environment that is inviting, safe, student-centered, and conducive to student learning. This environment supports each student and their differences so it is safe to take risks in learning and experience success in a variety of

ways. The foundation for success in our school is building positive, productive, trusting relationships throughout the school community. These relationships form various partnerships that are always centered around the child.

Each year the administrative and leadership team reflect and analyze performance of the previous year against goals and strategies, and use the information learned, to develop relevant goals for the next school year for student achievement, school climate, and overall growth within the global community. Strategies, expectations, and responsibilities are clearly defined and supervised by the administrative team and shared with the community. Progress toward goals are monitored, data collected, and assessed throughout the year with: learning walks, instructional observations, regular participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLC), mid-year review from teachers, school improvement meetings, and meaningful professional and staff development instead of traditional faculty meetings.

Positions are seldom open at Meriwether Lewis Elementary School, therefore hiring is very limited. 100% of the teachers are highly qualified and meet a high level of expectation in teacher and student performance. To ensure that high quality and growth continue, Meriwether Lewis Elementary School hires people that believe that all students can learn, value the importance of meeting the needs of each child, and have a vision of success for all children, that go beyond the state standards. Passion, energy, and dedication build strength within the school community that unifies us as a family, supporting each other in continuous growth.

Teachers have various opportunities to demonstrate their leadership by leading professional development, participation on the leadership team, modeling instruction for peers, and peer collaboration. They often organize many of our service projects with students and the community. Strong leadership is demonstrated by building and mentoring leaders. Leadership roles are often transferred to those that are developing leadership skills. Teachers develop leadership in students by supporting students-led discussions, student-peer class meetings, and recently, student-led in-service trainings for teachers in technology and school design.

Managing, guiding, leading a school community that is innovative, progressive, and committed to growth is a great privilege of this administrative team. Everyone is equitably invested, which makes the journey toward student success exciting, and success for us all.

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: Virginia Standards of Learning

Edition/Publication Year: 2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Pass Proficient	74	96	99	98	98
Pass Advanced	23	81	63	74	66
Number of students tested	66	70	72	84	79
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	6	4	7	4	3
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked			Masked	
Pass Advanced	Masked			Masked	
Number of students tested	1			2	
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked		
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked		
Number of students tested	2	4	1		
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	7	1	5	4	9
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1	2	2	1	1
<b>6.</b>					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.					

13VA6

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Virginia Standards of Learning

Edition/Publication Year: 2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Pass Proficient	91	97	97	98	98
Pass Advanced	45	60	68	60	65
Number of students tested	67	70	72	84	80
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	6	4	7	4	3
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked			Masked	
Pass Advanced	Masked			Masked	
Number of students tested	1			2	
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked		
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked		
Number of students tested	2	4	1		
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	7	1	5	4	9
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	1	2	2	1	1
<b>6.</b>					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.					

13VA6

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics                      Grade: 4 Test: Virginia Standards of Learning

Edition/Publication Year: 2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Pass Proficient	95	100	92	94	94
Pass Advanced	25	75	55	57	70
Number of students tested	75	73	85	80	82
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	2	5	3	3	5
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Pass Proficient					Masked
Pass Advanced					Masked
Number of students tested					3
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked		
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked		
Number of students tested	3	1	1		
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	73	71
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	18	7
Number of students tested	3	4	3	11	14
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	3	2	2	1	1
<b>6.</b>					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.					

13VA6

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Virginia Standards of Learning

Edition/Publication Year: 2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Pass Proficient	100	95	98	96	95
Pass Advanced	63	66	79	76	72
Number of students tested	73	73	85	81	83
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	2	5	3	3	5
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Pass Proficient				Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced				Masked	Masked
Number of students tested				1	4
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked		
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked		
Number of students tested	3	1	1		
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	82	71
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	36	21
Number of students tested	3	4	3	11	14
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	3	2	2	1	1
<b>6.</b>					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.					

13VA6

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics                      Grade: 5 Test: Virginia Standards of Learning

Edition/Publication Year: 2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Pass Proficient	85	96	99	95	97
Pass Advanced	24	87	79	66	72
Number of students tested	74	82	80	77	68
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	9	2	4	5	4
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	9	2	4	5	4
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Pass Proficient				Masked	
Pass Advanced				Masked	
Number of students tested				3	
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	90	86	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	30	7	Masked
Number of students tested	4	2	10	15	7
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked		Masked		
Pass Advanced	Masked		Masked		
Number of students tested	2		1		
<b>6.</b>					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					
Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.					

13VA6

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: Virginia Standards of Learning

Edition/Publication Year: 2012 Publisher: Pearson

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Pass Proficient	97	94	100	95	100
Pass Advanced	53	67	68	73	68
Number of students tested	74	82	80	77	68
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	6	4	7	4	3
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Pass Proficient				Masked	
Pass Advanced				Masked	
Number of students tested				3	
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked			
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked			
Number of students tested	1	1			
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Pass Advanced	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked	Masked
Number of students tested	9	2	4	5	4
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Pass Proficient	Masked		Masked		
Pass Advanced	Masked		Masked		
Number of students tested	2		1		
<b>6.</b>					
Pass Proficient					
Pass Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b> Masked indicates data were not made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.					

13VA6